AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for initiating communication in real-time between two users in a multi-user communication environment, the method comprising:

providing a unique code generated by a multi-user communication environment to a first user in the multi-user environment during communication between the first user and a second user, the code being transmitted by the first user to [[a]] the second user via a mode outside of the multi-user communication environment;

~~whereby~~ wherein the second user initiates real-time and secure communication with the first user after the second user receives the unique code by submitting the code to the multi-user environment and the code is authenticated in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 2 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the unique code is provided by the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 3 (original): The method according to claim 2, wherein the multi-user communication environment is an online multiplayer gaming environment.

Claim 4 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code is transmitted by the first user through at least one of an email program, a telephone conversation, a handwritten note, a chat room program, direct communication, a instant message program, and a facsimile.

Claim 5 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the first user initiates real-time and secure communication with the second user after the code is authenticated in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code comprises a sequence of symbols.

Claim 7 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code comprises a sequence of alpha-numeric symbols.

Claim 8-23 (Canceled)

Claim 24 (Currently amended): A readable media having instructions for facilitating communication in real-time between two users in a multi-user communication environment, the instructions performing steps comprising:

allowing the two users to communicate within the multi-user communication environment by selecting from a menu of pre-determined words;

providing a unique code generated by the multi-user communications environment to a first one of the two users in the multi-user communications environment while communications are being exchanged between the two users, wherein the menu fails to provide for the transmission of the unique code to the other of the two users thus requiring the unique code to be transmitted by the first one of the two users to the other of the two users via a mode outside of the multi-user communication environment; and

allowing the other of the two users to transmit free form communications to the first one of the two users upon the other of the two users submitting the unique code generated by the multi-user environment to the multi-user communications environment for authenticating the unique code with the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 25 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is a random sequence of symbols generated by the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 26 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the multi-user communication environment is an online multiplayer gaming environment.

Claim 27 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is provided in response to a request by the first one of the two users.

Claim 28 (original): The readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is valid for a limited period of time.

Claim 29-43 (Canceled).